

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NINTH SESSION MYONGDONG AFFAIR TRIAL

REF: SEOUL 4890

BEGIN SUMMARY: PACE OF TRIAL ACCELERATED SHARPLY ON JULY 10 AS PRESIDING JUDGE FORCED DEFENSE TO CONQINUE QUESTIONING DEFENDANTS UNTIL EIGHT PM IN EVENING. ONLY THREE DEFENDANTS NOW REMAIN TO BE QUESTIONED BY DEFENSE. DEFENSE PLANS TO CALL NUMBER OF OUTSIDE WITNESSES FOR UPCOMING SESSIONS BUT JUDGE APPEARS DETERMINED TO COMPLETE TRIAL WITHIN SIX MONTH TIME FRAME REQUIRED BY LAW. WIVES DID NOT ATTEND TRIAL NOR APPEAR AT COURTHOUSE. TESTIMONY OF DEFENDANTS GENERALLY FOLLOWED PATTERN OF PREVIOUS SESSIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. PACE OF MYONGDONG AFFAIR TRIAL ACCELERATED SHARPLY ON JULY 10 AS PRESIDING JUDGE FORCED DEFENSE LAWYERS TO CONTINUE QUESTIONING DEFENDANTS UNTIL EIGHT PM. FOLLOWING MORNING SESSION DURING WHICH DEFENSE QUESTIONED FORMER YONSEI PROFESSOR SO NAM-TONG AND REV. YUN PAN-YUNG, JUDGE ORDERED DEFENSE LAWYERS TO COMPLETE THEIR QUESTIONING OF ALL DEFENDANTS DURING THE AFTERNOON SESSION NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TOOK. IN AFTERNOON SESSION WHICH STRETCHED FROM TWO PM UNTIL EIGHT PM DEFENSE COMPLETED QUESTIONING OF CATHOLIC FATHERS NAM SE-UNG, MUN CHANG-HYON, CHONG TOK-PIL, AND KIM SUNG-HUN, BUT THEN PLEADED FOR ADJOURNMENT ON GROUNDS THAT IT NOT FAIR TO CONTINUE SINCE ALL WERE EXHAUSTED. JUDGE RELUCTANTLY ACCEDED AND SET

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NEXT SESSION FOR MONDAY, JULY 19, SINCE SATURDAY, JULY 17

NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

2. TESTIMONY OF DEFENDANTS GENERALLY FOLLOWED PATTERN OTHER SESSIONS. CASE OF KIM CHI-HA WAS FOCUS OF SOME TESTIMONY BECAUSE CATHOLIC PRIESTS HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN EARLIER MEETINGS AT WONJU AND CHONJU DURING WHICH POET'S DECLARATION OF CONSCIENCE WAS READ. INDICTMENT AGAINST THEM ALLEGES THAT THESE MEETINGS WERE PRECURSORS TO MARCH 1 MEETING WHERE LETTER FROM KIM CHI-HA'S MOTHER WAS READ. PRIESTS VIGOROUSLY DENIED THAT KIM CHI-HA IS A COMMUNIST AND DESCRIBED HIM AS VICTIM OF POLITICAL RETALIATION BY GOVERNMENT.

3. AT NEXT SESSION, DEFENSE WILL CALL FATHER SIN HYON-PONG, DR. CHONG IL-HYONG, AND YI TAE-YONG. FOLOWING COMPLETION OF DEFENSE QUESTIONING OF DEFENDANTS, PROSECUTION AND DEFENSE CAN CALL OUTSIDE WITNESSES AND DEFENSE LAWYERS HAVE INDICATED THEY PLAN TO CALL A GOOD NUMBER. JUDGE FOR HIS PART HAS INDICATED THAT HE DETERMINED TO FINISH TRIAL WITHIN SIX MONTH TIME FRAME REQUIRED BY LAW.

4. WIVES OF DEFENDANTS DID NOT ATTEND TRIAL NOR DID THEY APPEAR AT COURTHOUSE.

5. COMMENT: IN FACE OF DETERMINED GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO BRING MYONGDONG TRIAL TO EARLY CONCLUSION, DEFENSE LAWYERS NOW DESPERATLY FIGHTING TO DELAY TRIAL FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER AS THEY HAVE TOLD US TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM FOREIGN MEDIA EXPOSURE. END COMMENT.
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